

*Enter RACHEL from the Bradman. FRANCIS spins, slams the Compton Room door closed.*

RACHEL: We're a place missing. *(She collects a place setting from the table.)* What have you got there?

FRANCIS: Your soup.

RACHEL: Giss it here then! What's the matter wiv you?

FRANCIS: I haven't eaten in sixteen hours.

*RACHEL exits to the Bradman room. Enter GARETH.*

Listen! Both guvnors. Both rooms. I need everything twice. Get me more soup. Quick!

*Enter ALFIE with the charcuterie plate.*

ALFIE: *(Panting, out of breath.)* Here's yer cawld meats.

*ALFIE hands over the plate to FRANCIS and then turns up his pacemaker.*

FRANCIS: Look at that! Beautiful. Ham, beef, what do they call that sliced sausage there?

ALFIE: Pepperonly.

*FRANCIS takes the charcuterie plate from ALFIE and eats a slice. ALFIE watches him.*

FRANCIS: Beautiful.

You sound out of breath Alfie?

ALFIE: It's them 'kin stairs, they tek out of yer. I'll turn mi pace mekker up a couple of notches.

*FRANCIS takes the plate. STANLEY opens the door quickly, knocking ALFIE in the face. ALFIE makes a full turn and then rolls backwards down the stairs, unseen by STANLEY.*

STANLEY: Where's that soup you had?

FRANCIS: It was cold. I sent it back.

STANLEY: Vichyssoise?

FRANCIS: No. Back downstairs.

STANLEY: Get me the wine menu would you.

*(Aside.)* By which I mean that I'd like to drown in a bath of Grand Crus. My life is over, I can't find Rachel. I may never make love to her ever again. *(STANLEY takes the charcuterie plate, and closes the door. Enter GARETH with a second soup tureen.)*

GARETH: Rule number one, for a waiter. Don't eat the food. Soup for your other guvnor.

FRANCIS: Smashing. And he wants a wine list.

*GARETH reaches out to a supply of wine menus.*

GARETH: No empties? Have you cleared that room.

FRANCIS: Alright, alright!

GARETH: I'll send up the Quenelles de Volaille.

FRANCIS: Ah! My favourite, my Nan used to cook quenelles de volaille every bonfire night.

GARETH: Chicken balls!

*Exit GARETH, with an imperious glare.*

FRANCIS: I didn't think chickens had... I mean, cockerels obviously.

Never understood soup. You don't need a knife and fork to eat it, so it's not food, so it must be drink, in which case I'd rather have a pint.

*He picks up the tureen and drinks the soup straight from the tureen, downs it in one. Ends with a satisfying sigh. Enter RACHEL. FRANCIS hides the empty tureen behind his back.*

RACHEL: Francis, can you clear our table please of the soup, and we'd like to order some wine.

FRANCIS: *(With mouthful of soup.)* Yes Guv.

*Exit RACHEL into Bradman followed by FRANCIS. FRANCIS returns immediately with their soup tureen and empty bowls. He closes the*